

No. 2.

DECEMBER 17th.

1915.



# ALCESTER GRAMMAR SCHOOL RECORD.

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PRICE—SIXPENCE.      -   -   -   -   -   -      EVERY TERM.

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ALCESTER,  
CHRONICLE OFFICE, HIGH STREET,  
1915.

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No. 2.

December 17th.

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EDITOR (*pro tem.*)—Mr. Wells.

SUB-EDITOR—Miss Evans.

COMMITTEE—Dorothy Taylor, Phyllis Alison, Margaret Farquhar, W. Cowper, K. Hall, H. Whitehouse.

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## EDITORIAL.

Another term is nearing its close, and the time has again come round for the appearance of the School Magazine. This time there seems little for me to add to that which will be found in the following pages, except, perhaps, very briefly to comment upon the term as a whole, and to indicate the impression that it has left upon my mind.

With most of us—the older amongst us, at any rate—the war has formed a constant and sombre background in our minds.

Since term began in September we have been continually reminded of the necessity for all of us to help in this time of our country's great need, and I am very glad to be able to say that the school—staff, girls and boys—has always willingly and cheerfully responded to each appeal that has been made.

Early in the term the girls gave up their out-matches so that train fares might be saved to meet more urgent claims. They took up knitting, and have stuck to their needles with such perseverance that we have been able to provide twenty-six pairs of mittens, twenty-two mufflers, four helmets, eighteen pairs of socks, and three pairs of cuffs for our soldiers.

There have been constant collections in the school, and the home football matches have been used as opportunities for raising funds. The money so obtained has either been spent in buying wool for the girls' knitting, or has been sent to the Red Cross or some other similar society connected with our soldiers or sailors.

Eggs also have been brought each week for the wounded in the hospitals.

Nor must I omit to mention the very successful Form entertainment which revealed much talent—hitherto unknown—and at the same time provided more of the "wherewithal" to pay our wool bill. We are looking forward to more ventures of this kind next term.

All these things have kept the war constantly in our minds, but perhaps as a school we had it most emphatically brought home to us when on December 1st we lost Mr. Hall, who has been here since the school was opened, almost four years ago. We had a momentary glimpse of the familiar figure in the fresh garb—a brief good-bye, and he was gone, to shoulder more actively his portion of the great burden, leaving us behind with a very real sense of our loss, and forging yet another of those links of friendship, which already bind so many of

us to England's great army. Good luck be with him! We, who know him, can trust him to do his part.

Only another word and I have done. Are we learning, do you think, in these days, to be more unselfish, and to lend a helping hand to those in need? If so, may we learn the lesson well, and not forget it when the war is over.

### LES SYMPATHIES POUR L'EXILÉ.

Après le tonnerre des canons menaçant à chaque coup votre maison de s'écrouler, après le sifflement des obus qui vous ont chassés dans vos caves, après une fuite précipitée dans la nuit, qu'il est bon d'entendre une voix amie vous dire : "Reposez-vous, refaites-vous."

Cet accueil nous fut fait à Lierre, dans un couvent hospitalier ; nous y dormîmes sur une chaise ou étendues par terre, la tête sur notre baluchon. Car, il ne fallait pas songer à un lit : nous arrivions plus de cent et la maison était pleine. Mais qu'importe ? on dormait. Le lendemain il nous était permis de réconforter notre âme à la chapelle et de restaurer nos forces physiques au réfectoire, après quoi l'on se demanda s'il fallait pousser plus loin. La réponse vint soudaine et effroyable ! Une bombe éclatait à nos côtés, faisant des victimes parmi les soldats blessés et les charitables sœurs qui les pansaient.

Nouvelle fuite éperdue, plus anxieuse que la première. Un long voyage plein d'angoisses. Onze heures consécutives de train ; pas de vivres ; des arrêtes multiples et prolongés en pleine campagne, et l'on sait que le combat est engagé à quelques cent mètres, on voit les troupes et les convois de blessés.

Oh ! que la prière est facile dans ces heures douloureuses ! Dans le beau pays de Flandre, qui alors, (c'était la fin de Septembre) ne connaissait pas encore les horreurs de la guerre, les braves campagnards accourent au passage du train, manifestant leur sympathie.

Enfin le train entre dans la gare de Courtrai. Charmante petite ville ! Toute la population était à la sortie de la station, rivalisant de prévenance pour décharger les voyageurs, les conduire dans les salles, où les pauvres réfugiés trouveront quelques heures de repos. Quel empressement pour ranger les lits en longues files, distribuer la nourriture, verser à boire. Courtrai reçut cette nuit plus de 2000, fuyards.

Le lendemain nous faisons route vers Ostende et toute la population de Courtrai nous accompagne encore jusqu'à la gare. Et nous, nous souhaitons que jamais l'ennemi ne dévaste la riante petite cité. Dieu semble avoir écouté ce vœu : la bonne ville de Courtrai continue son œuvre hospitalière.

Nous fûmes trois semaines à Ostende, où il nous fut permis de desservir les ambulances. Alors avec le soldat blessé sur nos bras et sur nos épaules, il nous fallut abandonner la patrie, et le même bateau, qui transportait nos braves, nous déposa à Folkestone sur le sol de la généreuse Angleterre.

Aurait-on pu imaginer que l'Angleterre nous recevrait comme des amis que l'on comble d'égards et de délicates attentions ?

Vous passez du bateau sur la terre ferme. Un guide vous tend la main, vous indique le train à prendre, mais avant que de fermer la portière, il vous offre de quoi vous restaurer. Le train roule et ne s'arrête qu'à l'endroit précis où vos aimables conducteurs veulent vous déposer. Où sommes nous ? nous n'en savons rien, mais qu'importe ! On se sent le cœur à l'aise : une main amie nous guide.

Et puis nous voilà à l'établissement charitable qui doit nous héberger pendant quelques jours : l'institut "Bethnal Green School" de Leytonstone. Une table abondamment servie nous y attend ; les nurses nous préviennent de doux sourires, d'aimables invitations. Les couchettes des enfants nous sont destinées. Pauvres petits ! ils dorment au grenier et nous cèdent leurs lits. Merci chers bambins ! dans vos petits lits roses nous nous sommes crus redevenus enfants et les cauchemars de la guerre n'ont pas hanté nos rêves.

Le moment de la séparation arrive. On dut se disperser par groupes ; mais ce fut pour rencontrer sur tous les points de l'Angleterre le même chaleureux accueil, pour être témoin partout de ce que peut organiser l'ingénieuse charité pour les réfugiés Belges.

Oh ! qu'il fait du bien au cœur, ce mot de bienvenue d'un magistrat ; ce paternel accueil d'un pasteur : "Vous êtes des nôtres ;" ce dévouement général d'une modeste cité où grands et petits rivalisent de zèle pour vous préparer un "home" confortable ; ce concours même des enfants qui sacrifient leurs prix pour soulager les infortunés ; ce cordial souhait qu'une petite

filles cache dans le pot de confiture destiné à des amis inconnus de Belgique !

Comme ils réjouissent, ces charmants cadeaux de Noël ; ces délicates attentions qui préviennent tous les besoins et tous les désirs ; toutes ces industries inventées pour adoucir l'amertume de l'exil ; petite fête sportive, audition de gramophone, concert et pique-nique ; ces visites et invitations multipliées, toujours gracieuses !

Et que d'autres marques de sympathie ! Cette indulgente patience à écouter notre jargon mi-anglais, mi-français ou flamand ; ces sourires et ces salutations le long de notre route avec un air de dire : " Vous nous êtes des hôtes bien chers."

C'est son cœur même que l'Anglais donne aux pauvres exilés avec toute sa puissance d'aimer, avec son fonds inépuisable de générosité.

Une réfugiée Belge.

#### A CHARACTER SKETCH.

By one or two he has been called " Boanerges Son of Thunder." This is not an unsuitable name, for at certain times he can roar and rage like a true Son of Thunder. But that is when he is in one of his violent tempers. Then he is a fearsome sight. His mien is awe-inspiring. Woe to the poor, unfortunate object against whom his anger is directed. For, in that time, that person will be likened to more things than he could ever have imagined it possible. But it is only on rare occasions that anything worse follows. Moreover, whatever the cause for his outbreak, when once the flood gates of his wrath have been opened, by the next lesson he has quite forgiven, if not forgotten, both the cause and the offender.

He is frank and manly. There is nothing foolish or affected about him. He has a keen sense of honour and one instinctively feels that he would do nothing mean or dishonourable, for he is a sportsman and brings the elements of sport to bear upon his dealings with others. He has a bluff, hearty way of speaking and a laugh which is pleasant to hear. Little children like him, and older boys and girls are willing and even eager to perform small services for him.

He is strong-willed and is rather intolerant of other people's opinions. In other matters, however, he is quite just. Often when a boy or girl has got into trouble at school he has helped them out of their difficulty and has not enforced

any penalty, leaving it to their own commonsense to do better next time. In this way he shows a certain generosity of mind and good judgment, for it is sometimes better to be merciful than severe. In times of danger he has shown that he can be cool and collected. Then he does not lose his head, nor become flurried and heated. Instead, he calmly does the best thing possible to avert the danger, and then goes on with his work.

D.T.

#### MIDSUMMER NIGHT.

Night is awaking,  
Midsummer night ;  
Moonbeams are making  
Bright shafts of light.  
Harebells are ringing,  
Fairies are singing,  
Away in the forest  
Revels begin.  
And gnomes, from the ground,  
Are prancing around,  
Elves are now dancing,  
Merry the din.  
Tiny feet tripping  
Over mounds skipping,  
Tiny wands waving  
Bring pleasant dreams.  
Silence is falling,  
For King and Queen calling  
To join in the revels  
'Midst the moonbeams.  
In the breeze sighing,  
Bats are loud crying,  
Night owls are screeching  
High overhead.  
Thro' bushes flitting,  
In the glen sitting  
Fairies are feasting,  
Mortals in bed.  
O'er the sky riding  
The moon, swiftly gliding,  
Is now almost sinking,  
Stars disappear.  
Cocks loudly crowing,  
Cattle, now lowing,  
Warn all the wee folk  
Morning draws near.  
For day is a-dawning,  
Beautiful day.  
The light of the morning  
Sends night away.

P.A.

*"You can pay too high a price for Peace, but you cannot pay too high a price for finding and keeping your own soul."*

War is terrible. In it, both individual and nation suffer. Rich and poor, it affects all alike. Even future generations do not escape. On their shoulders falls no small burden of taxation to pay for the war. Yet, with all its evils, there are worse things than war—a dishonourable peace, and the evils borne in its train.

The dearest thing an individual possesses is his honour. The things he will not sacrifice are his ideals. To lose his honour or his ideals is to lose that, which, to him, constitutes all his joy in life. Without them, he feels himself of small account, a little higher only than the beasts that perish. Riches may remain; comforts may still be his; he may still be free to choose his own path; free to go the round of ceaseless pleasure, yet without honour and without ideals, he is soulless. "Where there is no vision, the people perish."

As with the individual, so with the nation. A nation without honour, without ideals, is no longer great. For true greatness lies not in those things which last but a little while and then depart; it lies in the soul.

To every nation, once in a while, there comes a time when it must decide, sometimes in an hour, sometimes in less, whether there shall be war or peace. In that hour, great issues are at stake, and it lies with those responsible for the government of the nation which of the two shall be chosen either honourable war or dishonourable peace.

In the past England has had to make many of these momentous decisions, and not always has the honourable course been pursued, yet, in the majority of such cases, the bulk of the nation has been on the side of Honour and Justice, while its Ministers have failed either to interpret the feelings of the people correctly, or have, for some reasons of their own, taken a different course.

In the War of American Independence, Great Britain did not take the right course. But the American colonists did. They chose to risk all, and to break all ties with the Mother Country rather than give up their ideals of Liberty and Independence. In the Civil Wars, Cromwell and his soldiers, together with the people of England, stood up manfully for their ancient liberties and privileges. But they went too far in executing Charles I., for he, too, died on the scaffold rather than give up his rights. All these preferred War

to Peace. They could have purchased Peace by the sacrifice of their ideals, but that was too high a price to pay.

During the reign of Charles II. we had peace, a peace which was a disgrace to England; a peace purchased by a profligate monarch and his crew of dissolute Ministers, in order that they might enjoy themselves at the expense of their country's honour. In that reign, Dutch guns were heard up the Medway. Our shipping was burnt in the Thames. Then a feeling of shame made itself felt through all the land, and men's thoughts went back to the days of the Commonwealth when, indeed, pleasures were scarce, and times were dull, but when England's name was feared and respected throughout Europe. Then, we had peace, but at what a cost! England, humbled by the Dutch, and her honour, which should have been above price, sold by her king to the French for a few hundreds of thousands a year.

In the reign of the second George, during Walpole's long term of office, we had peace, but a discreditable peace. It was a time, when, indeed, England waxed fat and prosperous, when her people grew wealthy and contented; but England, the true England, was dead. Stagnation political, moral and religious, had fallen upon her. All the evils of peace were abroad, and they were worse than those of war. Men cared nought for religion, nought for honour, nought for virtue. Their nobler ideals and higher instincts seemed dead. Evil and wickedness were in the highest places. There was bribery in public and vice in private life. Even the clergy were degenerate. Only one desire was felt; greed for gold. Something was needed to awaken the people, to recall them to their sense of duty and honour. This was afterwards supplied by Pitt and Wesley and War. In Walpole's time we paid dearly for peace.

To-day we could have paid even more dearly for peace, but our King and his Ministers are honourable men, and acted as such. We were bound by no treaty, by no bonds, except those of Honour and our plighted word. Belgium had lost all save honour. Could we do less than she had done? Before the war she was a little country, famed only for her industry. Now, her name will for ever be famous. She will go down to the ages as a country which placed its honour above everything, and which, sooner than break its word, courted destruction. If England had remained



silent, her dead would now be alive, and she would be richer by thousands of millions, but she would no longer be truly great, for she would have forfeited her honour. She would have lost her soul. Our love for her would not be so great. She would have lost some of the most glorious pages in her history, for our deeds in this war would not have been done. Our pride in her would not be so great. For the England we love, and of which we are proud is a noble land; a land of high ideals and aspirations; a land of unselfish instincts; a land of light and liberty and freedom, of unsullied honour, a land for which many have found it easy to die. If England had acted thus, she would have lost her strongest claims to our love. She would have paid too high a price for peace.

Thus, it may truly be said that a peace purchased by the sacrifice of a nation's honour and ideals is not worth the price, and that "You can pay too high a price for peace, but you cannot pay too high a price for finding and keeping your own soul." For "What doth it profit a man if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" As with a man, so with a nation. "You can pay too high a price for peace." D.T.

#### WILLIAM THE KAISER.

(With apologies to "Willow, the King.")

William the Kaiser's a monarch grand,  
Row upon row his warriors stand,  
Every day as he sits on his throne  
The company fall before him prone,  
And as he solemnly raises his hand  
The chant goes up, "Gott strafe England."

"William, oh, William," the warriors cry,  
"Be on thy guard, for the Lion is nigh,"  
And roaring and ramping, fierce and strong,  
Comes the British Lion along;  
For vengeance he will surely take  
Upon that boasting "Him of Hate."

"Who is this? the Kaiser said,  
"Away with the braggart! Off with his head!"  
Who is there fears a contemptible beast  
Who can do nothing better than grab and then  
feast?"

What do you say, my generals bold,  
We'll soon have England in our hold?"

But the Lion rushed on with a roar and a leap,  
And defeated that Kaiser's great army and fleet,  
And as he proudly surveyed his work,  
He tossed his mane with a mighty jerk.  
"A fig for the Kaiser," he proudly said,  
"Did he think Old England's spirit was dead?"

A.P.J.

#### A DREAM.

She lay in a hammock idly swinging to and fro. How beautiful the garden appeared. The roses, pink, red, and yellow, sent forth their most delicate scent, the honeysuckle, winding round the willow tree, gently shook its flowers in the breeze, and the bees buzzed in and out of the masses of scarlet nasturtiums. A faint breeze floated up from the river on which big water lilies grew.

She jumped out of the hammock, and ran to the river's edge. Oh! how big the water lilies seemed, and, ah! they were not still—they floated up and down. This was interesting. One floated so near that she could have touched it. There was seated in it a frog who looked at her with a questioning look. He did this three times, and the third time he said. "Won't you come for a sail?" She jumped in delightedly, and away they went. "Would you like to go for a long sail?" "Yes," she replied.

"You're very silent," said the frog. "Know that I am a wise person, and you can ask me any number of questions." "Why do the bees buzz?" asked the little maid. "For the same reason that we talk, of course," he answered. "And the grasshoppers, why do they hop?" "Oh!" replied the frog, "many years ago, when the world was young, a magician lived at the foot of an old oak; a party of little elves were continually teasing him, by chirping and swinging in the branches of the tree. One day, unable to stand it any longer, he shouted, 'Hop it,' and they have hopped it ever since." "Why do dormice sleep so much?" she asked. "Dear me, don't you know that? I thought children were educated nowadays," said he. "A witch fairy, tired of hearing children protesting against going to bed, waved her wand, and said, 'Dormez maintenant,' and immediately they were turned into dormice, and sleep many months of the year." "What's that building over there?" she went on. "That's the old mill, and now we shan't be able to go any further for it blocks the

way," he added. "But if you like, my friend, the Sparrow, sitting on the bank there, will take you for a ride on his back. Oh, you'd like it, you say? Very well, then, jump out. Hold tight; good-bye," and with this the frog went away.

Up, up they went, and at first she was so giddy that she dare not look down, but she soon grew used to the sensation. They were much too high to see below, so she begged the sparrow to go lower. "What's that animal crawling along so slowly?" she asked. "Don't be silly," snapped the Sparrow, "that's a train; I had better take you still lower."

"What is this place we are flying over, Sparrow?" she said. "Oh, it's just the little town of Alcester," he replied. "And that grey and red building, what is it?" she asked. "That's the Grammar School," answered the Sparrow. "Oh, a school, what do they learn there?" she demanded. "Many things," said he. "One of their chief accomplishments is the use they make of rulers and compasses at all times, not only in geometry and drawing." "What is that noise?" "Oh, that is the clicking of needles, for they are all busy knitting for the soldiers," he replied. "Now I can hear quite a different noise, what is it?" she asked. "Only a class having mathematics which they don't seem to like," he said.

"Let us go on to the window ledge and then we can see inside," she suggested. "Oh, whatever are they doing?" she cried. "Trying black felt hats on for the winter term," he whispered, "and just listen to the boys laughing. But come, now, we must not stay here any longer." She jumped on to his back, and away they flew. She could see something shining below, and she looked down to see what it was. As she did so, she felt so giddy, that she loosed the Sparrow's neck. Down, down, down she went, until at last she reached the ground with a bump.

She opened her eyes, and gazed around. She had fallen out of the hammock.

M. A.

#### ROLL OF HONOUR.

Mr. Gibbons, 2nd Artists' Rifles.  
T. H. Gostling, 16th Warwicks.  
Mr. Hayes, Sherwood Foresters.  
A. O. Haslam, 6th Warwicks.  
Mr. Hall, 2nd Lieut., 6th Staffordshires.  
P. J. Perks, R.A.M.C.

#### LOWER FOURTH ENTERTAINMENT.

The Lower Fourth entertainment was a surprise-packet for the whole school—in more ways than one. The programme consisted of:—

##### PART I.

- 1—Song . . . . . "Begone, dull Care!"  
The Class.
- 2—Recitation . . "Corporal Dick's Promotion"  
M. Farquhar. (Conan Doyle)
- 3—Song . . . . . "Pat went for a Soldier."  
H. Bradley.
- 4—Recitation . . "Jackanapes & the Duckling."  
M. A. (Mrs. Ewing)
- 5—Song . . . . . "The Drunken Sailor."  
The Class.
- 6—Sketch . . . . . "Sarah Kettle."  
Mrs. De Cresse (Hostess), M. Johnson.  
Mrs. Fitzroy (Visitor), B. Jones.  
Sarah Kettle (Servant), M. Farquhar.
- 7—Piano . . . . . Waltz (Grieg)  
M. James.

##### PART II.

- 1—Scenes from Julius Cæsar. Act 2, scene 2;  
Act 3, scene 2.  
Cæsar—H. Howse.  
Calpurnia—K. Perks.  
Antony—G. Thomas.  
Decius Brutus—M. James.  
Citizens—The Class.
- 2—Piano . . . "The Watchman's Song." (Grieg)  
M. James.
- 3—Story . . "The Happy Prince." (Oscar Wilde)  
M. Whitehouse.
- 4—Story . . "Epaminondas." (S. African Folk lore)  
Mammy—H. Bradley.  
Epaminondas—R. Howse.
- 5—Dance . . . . . "Tipperary Reel"  
M. Adkins.  
S. Harris.  
B. Jones.  
M. James.
- 6—Recitation . . . . . "Carry on."  
The Class.  
"God Save the King."

All of which everyone enjoyed. We had no idea that the Lower Fourth could sing at all, much less that they possessed a nightingale" soloist, as one member of the audience remarked after hearing H.B. sing. "'Tis true that occasionally we have heard weird squeaks proceeding from the hall at rehearsals, but "singing" was the last thing to enter our minds.

Neither were we aware that reciting was one of their accomplishments, and fancy a Lower Fourthite having such a marvellous memory as M.W. had. It would be extremely interesting to know why M.A. was in such a hurry, and why she looked so unutterably miserable while reciting. Was there any danger of her chair giving way? She certainly seemed much happier as an Irish maiden, dancing on terra firma. Perhaps her three companions reassured her.

Who was the mysterious pianist who played, when the curtains were drawn, between the acts? Programmes were consulted, but to no avail. Afterwards we heard that it was M.J. By that time, however, we were surprise-proof, and said nothing.

But the acting!! This was the biggest surprise of all. The original sketch, "Sarah Kettle" (Yes, I did say original. Lower Fourth. No, there's no mistake) was a proof that there are play-writers and dramatists in that most marvellous of forms. M.J., as Mrs. Fitzroy, was quite stately, and November 19th may always be known in future as the memorable occasion of which her hair was tidy. As Mrs. de Cresse, B.J.'s walk, not to mention her attire, was unique, and M.F., as "Sarah Kettle," made an ideal servant—perhaps more in appearance than in ways—but we were amazed to know that she could be very angry sometimes, or that there was anything out of the ordinary in the (somewhat soiled) state of her hands.

The scenes from "Julius Caesar" taught us many things. In the first place, we learnt that sheets can come in very useful on certain occasions, also certain articles of jewellery, particularly large yellow brooches; that a bier can be made of small chairs covered over with a green cloth; that some of the Roman mob spoke with a broad Warwickshire accent; that Julius Caesar had a most youthful appearance, and that after his death he lived again as one of the Roman mob.

From "Epaminondas," too, we learnt several things. S.H., instead of being rather nervous and excitable, can tell a story to a room full of people just as she would to a few girls in the cloak-room. H.B., besides having a "nightingale" voice, also makes an ideal nigger (this is meant as a compliment) and R.H. is a typical "Epaminondas."

On the whole, it was scarcely believable that the Lower Fourth could have given such a good

entertainment. But we put it down to luck chiefly; for certainly a form which possesses singers, reciters, actors and actresses, pianists, and even play-writers, is unusually favoured.

#### A MEMBER OF THE AUDIENCE.

M. FARQUHAR.

#### CARRY ON.

When the ammunition's low, carry on.  
When a volunteer must go, carry on.  
When you feel that you must rest,  
Or you'll have to journey west.  
Stop your grousing, do your best—carry on.

M. JOHNSON.

What of the men?  
The men were bred in England;  
The bowmen and the yeomen,  
The lads of dale and fell.  
Here's to you and to you!  
To the hearts that are true,  
And the land where the true hearts dwell.

THOMAS.

Admirals all, for England's sake,  
Honour be yours, and fame!  
And honour as long as the waves shall break  
To Nelson's peerless name!

HOWSE.

We have fought such a fight for a day and a  
night,  
As may never be fought again!  
We have won great glory, my men!  
And a day less or more,  
At sea or ashore,  
We die—does it matter when?

H. BRADLEY.

We tell you that which you yourselves do know.

M. FARQUHAR.

That we, too, like them, may carry on.

STAFF.

And, falling, fling to the host behind.

THE CLASS.

Play up! play up! and play the game.



## THE LOWER FOURTH REHEARSALS.

Oh! those weird squeaks and mumblings,  
Coming from within the hall;  
Oh! those sudden stamps and rumblings.  
Made by "actors," great and small!

Do not be alarmed to hear them,  
Though they do seem strange, no doubt,  
'Tis the Lower Fourth, rehearsing—  
How they bang and jump about!

Oh! those studious Fourth-formers,  
Learning poems, songs and rhymes!  
Oh! those dances—good foot-warmers,  
After school, in dinner-times!

Do not be surprised to see them.  
If they should seem strange to you,  
They are only Lower Fourthites,  
Who enjoy their hullabaloo.

Oh! those plays, so entertaining,  
Which they rehearse with great zeal!  
Oh! that poster, great praise gaining,  
For the "knitting Campaigns" weal!

Do not think they all are stage-struck  
Just because they like to act,  
They're the Lower Fourth Per-formers,  
That's a simple, well-known fact.  
P.A.

REFLECTIONS ON MOVING FROM AN  
OLD TO A NEW HOME.

It is possible that some who read this have never had the painful experience of a house-removal. Others who have, will probably sympathise more fully with that which I am about to write.

To stand by and watch the dear old place being dismantled, the old piano, grandfather's clock, and oak sideboard torn from their places—which have always exactly fitted them—and pushed into a great rumbling van, to be unceremoniously trundled away to Avonlea, is almost unbearable. I am quite sure that they will never fit into the new house as they did into this.

Our future abode, to quote the advertisement, is "a fine, large building, with all modern appliances and extensive grounds," in short, is everything desirable, except—home! It will be a long time before I can feel it is that, and I shall sorely miss the "homeyness" of this dear old house.

Yesterday evening I went to each of my old haunts round here, and at each I kept remembering something, sad, amusing or fanciful, associated with the spot. The old willow tree with my special seat in it, a dear little nook by the pond, where I have spent many a peaceful, pleasant Sunday afternoon, watching the moorhens on the calm water; the ancient apple tree by the garden gate—in whose topmost boughs I love to sit, and rock with the summer breeze—these are among my favourite haunts. And how hard it is to leave them! I wonder if any boy or girl who lives here in the future will find them out, all my cherished "secret" nooks. I wonder if he or she will keep the large hollow at the base of the willow—large enough for me to creep in and lie there, as a secret cupboard for various treasured possessions, as I used to do when I was quite little. I remember a brace of toy pistols, a rusty pocket knife, an old weather-beaten slouched hat (in which I loved to play brigands and burglars by myself!) and a collection of curious pebbles, with several odds and ends.

By the small, marshy pond I once built a miniature log hut, and it was my dearest pastime to wear the well-pulled-down slouch hat, stick the toy pistols in my belt, and play at being a lonely settler in the Far West—until the dinner bell sounded, and I became a small and hungry child once more.  
M.F.

## THE LATE KNITTING CRAZE.

## I.

Since the warm days of September  
We have all become a member  
Of the Knitting Club.  
Oh! the zeal with which we started,  
And how almost broken-hearted  
We, when by a stern decree,  
Stitches were fixed at fifty-three,  
And the scarves which long did take us  
To re-knit them they did make us.

Oh, then we were knitting, knitting,  
All and every day;  
For the soldiers—standing, sitting  
In the wet and gloomy trenches  
With their multitudinous stench,  
Flanders way.

## II.

'Tis December, dark and dreary,  
Yet our fingers are not weary,

And our zeal is unabated  
In getting pairs of socks well-mated.  
Still, you see, us working, working,  
Standing, walking, talking, sitting,  
All intent upon our knitting.

Very zealous we !

Oh ! still we're knitting, knitting,  
All and every day,  
For the soldiers, standing, sitting,  
In the wet and gloomy trenches,  
With their multitudinous stench,  
Flanders way.

### III.

Now, ye who jeer and say, " 'Twon't last,"  
Learn—our zeal is fixed and fast ;  
Know that when our cause is just  
We shall knit on—for we must,  
And continue knitting, knitting,  
Socks and scarves, helmets and mittens  
Until our needles rust,  
Or turn to dust.

And till Spring, we'll go on knitting  
All and every day,  
For the soldiers, standing, sitting,  
In the wet and gloomy trenches  
With their multitudinous stench,  
Flanders way. D.T.

### A CHARACTER SKETCH.

The subject of this study is serious, seldom smiling, not very talkative. Usually, she looks at the sober side of things, and is not very appreciative of the humorous. She speaks in an apparently carefully studied accent of slight astonishment. One feels inclined to insert mentally a note of exclamation after each remark. Her voice is s-s-sweet (accent on the "s," please, in her speech it is an important letter).

She is not much addicted to games, but enjoys a quiet "hop-sotch," with a friend. Not particularly brilliant in lessons . . . recitation is her best point . . . she takes them a little too seriously, and gets agitated over a very small mistake—one that a laugh would probably dispel. For instance, if she makes a very laughable error she becomes quite distressed, and is annoyed if she hears the faintest giggle following. She is usually distressed by a pun or an attempt to be witty, therefore, her friends have to be rather cautious.

She is a very pleasant companion—when one feels serious and thoughtful, but apt to be slightly irritating when one is in—well, what a small friend of mine calls a "bubble-and-squeak" mood. Generally, people have a feeling that she thinks them too lightminded.

Occasionally, she has a very sweet smile, which shows a decided dimple in each cheek. She is very faithful to her friends, and never would do anything underhand. Neither does she ever enter into a petty dispute over a trifle, as so many people have a habit of doing.

I think that when she grows up she will enjoy pamphlets on "isms," Antinomianism, Evangelicism—that is, if she has patience enough to wade through their scientific terms and many-syllabled words. M.F.

### SCHOOL ALPHABET.

**A** stands for Alcester, the site of the school,  
**B** stands for Boys who forget every rule.  
**C** is the Classroom we use every day ;  
**D** stands for Dunces whose names we won't say.  
**E** stands for Effort, made sometimes, no doubt ;  
**F** stands for Fun when pranks are about.  
**G** stands for Girls and the Games of the year  
**H** stands for Hockey, when winter draws near.  
**I** stands for Ink—O, the fingers all black !  
**J** stands for Juniors who sometimes get slack.  
**K** stands for Kicks, which are made at the ball,  
**L** stands for Lab.—refer Mr. Hall.  
**M** stands for Marks—the dread of each one ;  
**N** stands for nothing that's under the sun.  
**O** stands for Old boys, now serving well,  
**P** stands for Prop., which, if swallowed, may swell.  
**Q** stands for Questions which worry each mind,  
**R** is the Roll-call poor prefects must find.  
**S** stands for Seniors—studious crowd ;  
**T** stands for Talking, not always allowed.  
**U** stands for Upper-third, boisterous crew ;  
**V** stands for Volumes not long kept like new.  
**W** stands for Work of which plenty we get,  
**X** in some Algebra, isn't found yet.  
**Y** stands for Year, in which much is done ;  
**Z** stands for zeal, to be second to none.

M. V. AND P. A.

## LETTER TO THE EDITOR.

(FROM R. COLLINS).

Training Ship Mercury,  
Hamble, Hants.

MR. WELLS,

DEAR SIR,—I am getting on very nicely indeed here, although it seemed rather strange at first. We are now in the midst of the Christmas examinations. The daily routine is very interesting and I like it very much. We get up about half-past five in the morning, and from then until six we have recreation. At six o'clock the "fall in" is sounded, and then the divisions are mustered, and dismissed to clean the ship. As I ought to have said before, this not on the Mercury, but on the gunboat President, moored near the Mercury. She is mounted with six guns, the largest being a six-inch. At half-past six (five bells) the boys get dressed to go ashore. The boys soon row ashore, and the watches are marched up to the dressing room. Here they have to prepare for the daily inspection at a quarter past eight. After the inspection the band plays two hymns, and the National Anthem.

Then we again have recreation until a quarter to nine. We are then marched to church. After a quarter of an hour's service we are dismissed to go to our classes. We have instruction until twelve and then we have dinner. After dinner we either go for a walk, play football, or go up into the playing field. At six o'clock the "pack up" is sounded, and we have tea. After tea we again go to church, and then we have instruction or if it is a half-holiday go to the reading room, or have a concert. We go aboard at eight o'clock and to bed soon after.

We have a lot of football here, the first team being very good. I am not in the first yet, but I hope I shall be next year. The "messes" play one another, and the mess which is at the top gets a cup. We are also in a League, and we are doing fairly well so far.

Besides practical work and physical, we have a lot of science, algebra, geometry, and trigonometry.

There are boys going up from here to the navy very frequently, and they nearly all pass the advanced class, and do well. After leaving here they go to the Impregnable, where they have some different training.

I was sorry Baxter did not come, for I am sure he would have liked the life very much, but

I hope that some of the other boys may try, for the navy will need everyone later.

Yours sincerely,  
R. H. COLLINS.

## NOTES AND QUERIES.

It was surprising to hear from L. G. that Alexander the Great at one time had "water on the brain," especially as we thought that "aequa mens" meant "a cool head."

We sincerely hope that none of the members of the Upper Fourth, who went out to tea on November 26th, felt any ill effects afterwards.

If anyone has any difficulty in the pronunciation of the word "duchy" it might interest them to know that the correct pronunciation (according to K. S.) is "ducky."

No; the school is not in mourning. The girls have invested in new winter hats—that's all.

If the knitting zeal continues as it has begun there will probably be a scarcity of wool in Warwickshire. We have learnt that the various coloured squares which Form II. have knited are not going to be made into a representation of Joseph's coat, but are meant for a foot-rug for the soldiers. Is there any idea of startling the Germans in this, may we ask.

The caravan is deserted. The birds have flown. Is it because of the bad weather, or did the bull pay a second visit?

We have heard that the trade of the Alcester sweet shops has suffered very much during the last few months. Collections do lessen the contents of one's pocket, don't they?

## SCHOOL NOTES.

We all regret that Mr. Hall has left. He has obtained a commission as Second-Lieutenant in the 6th Staffordshires.

This term we welcomed two new members on the staff: Mr. K. Spence and Miss Hoskin, in place of Mr. Byrne and Miss Organ.

Gostling is now in France with his regiment.

Perks (I.) after having been once rejected, is now with the R.A.M.C.

Mr. Russell and Brown (I.) both offered to enlist, but were rejected.

Sisson is now studying at the Veterinary College in Liverpool.

N. Collins is with the firm of Philip Harris and Company, manufacturing chemists, Birmingham. Harbige goes to the same firm in January.

Baseley left in the middle of the term to take the place, at home, of his elder brother, who has enlisted.

R. Collins was twice mentioned for good work in the Mercury Training Ship Magazine.

Hall worked in a munition factory for five weeks of the summer holidays. For four out of the five he was on night work.

Whitehouse also did "war work" first at munitions, and later on a farm. Unfortunately, the strenuous work led to his being quite overdone.

Kathleen Smith did "war work" for five weeks of the holidays on a farm near Warwick, where they were very short-handed.

Other members of the school are known to have helped with fruit-picking, etc.

Congratulations to Madge V. Alison, Dorothy Hill and Daisy Lane on passing the Cambridge Senior Local Examination; also to C. S. Wright on qualifying as a male learner for provincial post office.

M. V. Alison is at the Notre Dame Training College, Liverpool.

Dorothy Hill and Daisy Lane are now student teachers at Studley and Haselor respectively.

The total amount subscribed by the school to various relief funds connected with the war is £14 15s. 3d. A statement of accounts is given elsewhere.

During the term, 187 eggs have been contributed for wounded soldiers and sailors. We hope that this practical way of helping will not be forgotten next term, when eggs become more plentiful.

Mr. Spence has kindly presented the following books to the library:—

Early Chapters in Science (Awdry).  
The Dominion of the Air (Bacon),  
After Worcester (Green).  
Ringed by Fire (Green).  
Sport in Ashanti (Skertchly).  
The Men of the Mountains (Crockett).  
The Jubilee Book of Cricket (Ranjitsinhji).  
America at Work (Fraser).

#### THE ALCESTER GRAMMAR SCHOOL SCOUTS.

The Scouts have done good work this term, although there have been few meetings. They are now ready to pass their first test, called the "Tenderfoot's Test;" They know the Scout law, and the Scout signs. They had also to learn to tie various kinds of knots, which they can now do.

The boys were one night sent out to collect material for a fire. When the material was collected, and each boy given two matches, they lit fires. The boys worked in pairs. At the next meeting they worked in patrols, and cooked some potatoes which they had to eat.

The Scouts have learnt staff drill and semaphore signalling. They have also been taught first-aid by Mr. Walker, the Scoutmaster. During the summer holidays the Scouts made an excursion to Alne Hills, where they enjoyed themselves.

The Patrol Leader and Corporal of the "Peacocks" left last term, and A. Harbige was elected Patrol Leader and G. Thomas, Corporal. The Scouts now number seventeen, and are making good progress.

W. COWPER,  
Senior Patrol Leader,

## SPORTS.

Although handicapped by mumps, the Football Team has been very successful. This term three home matches have been played—one against Stratford, one against Evesham and one against Redditch. A collection was made at each match for different funds, and altogether 35s. was realised. Only one team match has been played between the Tomtits and the Brownies in which the Tomtits were victorious by three goals to nil. We are having no hockey matches this season owing to the war. Instead, we are giving the money to help to buy comforts for soldiers and sailors. We are playing the team matches as usual. Also matches between the V. and the Upper III. and between the Upper IV. and the Lower IV. have been played. We are looking forward to a very exciting match between the V. and the Upper IV., which will be played at the end of the season.

The Football team for this season is :—

Goal—Bird I.

Backs—Perks, Hall (captain).

Half-backs—Heard, Cowper, Bunting I.

Forwards — Wright, Anker Harbige Baxter, Whitehouse.

Opponents	Where Played.	Goals.	
		For	Against
Stratford	Alcester	10	1
Redditch	Alcester	6	0
Evesham	Alcester	6	0

## STATEMENT OF SCHOOL CONTRIBUTIONS

To various Relief Funds, etc., since the beginning of the War.

		£	s.	d.
DR.				
1914.	Oct., to Collecting Box ...	1	13	7
	Nov. 14th, to O.B. Match ...	2	2	2
	Nov., to Box ...	1	3	1
	Dec. " ...	0	12	11½
1915.	Feb. " ...	0	6	2
	Mar. " ...	0	10	2
	May 21st, to Special Collections for Soldiers and Sailors ...	1	9	4½
	Oct. 1 Special Collection ...	1	10	4
	" 16, Collection at football match ...	0	8	0
	" 23 " " " " " " ...	0	17	0
	" 30 " " " " " " ...	0	10	1
	To box ...	1	7	11
	Nov. 19, to Lower IV. Entertainment ...	1	9	6½
	" 19 to box ...	0	14	10½
	Dec. 4, to balance ...	0	7	3
		£14	15	3

		£	s.	d.
CR.				
1914.	Oct. 19 By Capital & Counties Bank for National Relief ...	1	2	4
	Nov. 18 By payment to Belgian Relief Fund ...	3	7	2
1915.	Jan. 30 By Belgian Relief Fund ...	1	2	3
	Mar. 6 " " " " " " ...	0	10	9
	May 21 By Cheque sent to Overseas Club for the Penny Fund ...	1	15	0
	Oct. 1 By Cheque to Children of Empire Fund ...	1	10	4
	" 14 By Wool bought ...	0	15	2
	" 22 By subscription to Red Cross... ..	1	5	0
	Nov. 2 By Wool ...	0	15	10
	" 22 " " " " " " ...	2	4	2
	Dec. 4 By balance ...	0	7	3
		£14	15	3